

RIASS

Redbridge Information, Advice & Support Service
for Special Educational Needs & Disability



London Borough of
Redbridge



Redbridge Information, Advice & Support Service Annual Report 2024 Academic Year 2023/24

RIASS

RIASS (Redbridge Information, Advice and Support Service) was established in January 2016.

The team was created in response to legislation contained within the Children & Families Act 2014.

The legislation states that local authorities must provide a service offering information, advice and support for children, young people and parents/carers for special educational needs (SEN), disability, health and social care.

The team provide free, confidential and impartial information, advice and guidance which supports families to navigate SEN processes and understand their rights.

The RIASS team comprises of a manager, an advisor, a case worker and a support officer.

What do we mean by Information, Advice and Support?

IAS Services are not support services. Support is only part of the service, advice is more than information but less than support.

	What it looks like	How we do that
Information	Everything children, young people, parent/carers can access without contacting the service	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Website• Local Offer• Parent/carers courses• Newsletters
Advice	Help children, young people, parent/carers apply information to their own situation so that they can make informed decisions and advocate for themselves.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Triage• Website• Tribunal Packs• Information & Training Sessions• Advice from an advisor
Support	Helping families to act	Advisor appointment or attendance to a meeting

Support with complaints

Part of RIASS's role is to provide information, advice and support to young people and parent/carers who raise concerns about education, health, social care and local authority services.

Formal complaints take time to be resolved and most families who contact our service regarding complaints do not want to make formal complaints but would like their query dealt with as quickly as possible. RIASS will explain all the available options when trying to resolve concerns, which can still lead to a formal complaint being submitted, however we will help to resolve these matters before they reach this stage.

Education LBR	RIASS resolved before escalation to formal
Contact	162
Delay in Processes	131
Education Settings	
SEN Support	2
EHCP Implementation	18
Exclusions	26
Health	
Contact	2
Referral Process	12
Social Care	
Contact	2
Allocation of Support	7

Casework Summary

2151

Email contacts with
parents

18

Mediation and
conciliation sessions
RIASS attended

29

Annual Review
meetings attended

389

New referrals
made to RIASS

Top 5 Referral Reasons

- Signposting
- Placement Appeals
- School Complaints
- SEN Team Complaints
- Help with EHCP Process

“The team are really great, they have lots of knowledge and understand the challenges parents are facing”

How Parents Heard About Us

- LBR SEN Letters
- RIASS Poster
- Eventbrite
- Word of Mouth
- School SENCo
- Local Offer
- Other Professionals

Parent Training Sessions

81

Families accessed training & information sessions delivered by RIASS

9

Events delivered throughout 2023/24

“It felt very personable and friendly. Lots of information delivered, very knowledgeable”

Training Sessions Delivered

What is an EHCP?

Discusses EHCP sections and what a plan should look like.

Applying for an EHCP

Information on how to apply and the Needs Assessment process.

Annual Reviews

Discusses what a good Annual Review should include, along with outcomes and provision.

Visiting Schools

Discusses points to consider and questions to ask when visiting schools

Choosing a School

Held jointly with LBR to look at different services available and the referral process.

Transition Support Group

Held jointly with LBR for families with children in year 5

Accessing Short Breaks

held jointly with LBR to look at different short break services available

Preparing for Adulthood

Discusses what Preparing for Adulthood (PfA) is and how it is implemented

Social Media

657

**Newsletter
subscribers**

299

**Facebook
followers**

YouTube

**23 Videos for YP
and professionals**

**18 Subscribers
1309 Views overall**

**“Applying for an
EHCP” is our most
popular video**

2402

**RIASS website
hits**

130

**pages
on website**

425

**Text Service
subscribers**



Steering Groups RIASS sit on

- Child Friendly Borough
- HAF Project (Holidays, Activities and Food)
- Engagement Hubs

**“Thank you so much
for your support
and help with my
family and school”**

Outreach

- SMUN Coffee Morning
- Carers Rights Day with RCSS - Ilford Library
- Highlands Primary School Coffee Morning
- International Disability Day - Ilford Town Hall
- Avanti Court Primary School Coffee Morning
- Loxford Secondary School Coffee Morning
- Goodmayes Primary School Coffee Morning
- Hatchside School Coffee Morning
- Isaac Newton Primary School Coffee Morning
- St Peters and St Pauls Primary School Coffee Morning
- Redbridge Forum EHCP Event
- Children's Health & Wellbeing Event
- Cost-of-Living Market Place Event
- SMUN Coffee Morning
- Redbridge Forum Coffee Morning
- Ray Lodge Primary School Coffee Morning
- RCSS & RIASS Carers Week Event
- Disability Festival in the Park
- REWT & MHST Wellbeing Event at Fairlop Waters
- HAF Information Day
- Healthwatch in the Park

1402

**Parents & Carers engaged
with at outreach events**

**“Thank you for all
your help, such a
valuable service”**

Evaluations

How easy was it to get in touch with us?	58% of parents said it was easy, 33% said it was very easy
How helpful was the information, advice and support we gave you?	50% of parents said it was very helpful, 50% said it was helpful.
How neutral, fair and unbiased do you think we were?	50% of parents said we were very fair, 25% said we were fair.
What difference do you think our information, advice or support has made for you?	58% of parents said we made a great deal of difference, 33% said we had made some difference.
Overall, how satisfied are you with the service we gave?	41% of parents said they were extremely satisfied, 41% said they were satisfied.
Would you recommend our service to others?	100% of parents said they would recommend our service to others

Recognitions

RIASS was part of the working group for the 2023 Redbridge Disability Festival. The festival was shortlisted from 900 applications for an LGC (Local Government Chronicle) Award for community support and involvement within the borough of Redbridge. Although we were not successful this time we did make the finals and finished in the top 6 which was an amazing achievement for all those involved in the planning.



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Festival in The Park

Redbridge Disability Festival in the Park is always a big summer event which allows us to reach out to many new families and young people as well as catching up with some families we already support. Its always a fun packed day and this year we brought our young work experience student along too.



Information Day

In celebration of carers week, RIASS partnered up with RCSS (Redbridge Carers Support Service) for a second year to host an information day at Ilford Central Library. We recognise how important it is for parents/carers to receive peer support from community services and working with RCSS helps us to build a support network for the future.



Case Study

C's family contacted the service in June 2023.

C was having difficulties at primary school with high anxiety levels, difficulty in engaging in subjects and being socially isolated. Her progress was not at the expected levels and the family were concerned that she needed additional support.

The RIASS advisor provided the family with information on SEN Support within schools and attended a meeting at the school with them, C and the SENCO. It was agreed that C was receiving a considerable amount of support but still struggling therefore, the school would request an EHC assessment.

RIASS supported C and her family with completing Part A The Local Authority informed the family in July that they had refused to carry out an EHC Needs Assessment as C was due to move to secondary school within a few weeks and they wanted to wait to see what support she required there.

The family wanted to appeal the decision. RIASS explained the process and the family started the appeal and decided to hold mediation to see if this would be a quicker option.

Mediation was not able to be arranged until after the start of the new academic year. RIASS supported the family to meetings between the primary school and the new secondary school in the last few weeks of term to make sure that everything was in place and that the secondary school was aware of the support needs.

When C started secondary school, it was apparent very early on that she still required considerable support, if not more support than she had had in primary school. The school submitted another request for an EHC Needs Assessment just before mediation was held.

When mediation was held the new school attended and produced evidence they had already gathered within the short space of two weeks since C had started school there. The school also produced the new needs assessment request.

It was agreed at mediation for the Needs Assessment to start immediately and not wait 6 more weeks for panel to make another decision.

RIASS supported the family and C throughout the EHC Needs Assessment. RIASS captured C's views and went through the draft plan. C is now receiving the appropriate support and recent contact has been made with the family who have informed us that C has made much progress and is engaging well within school.

RIASS spoke to C ahead of this case study being submitted for her views. C informed us she had been extremely anxious about school, as she experienced a great deal of confusion with understanding her schoolwork and what was required of her. She felt relieved that RIASS had supported her and listened to her concerns as well as the concerns of her family. She was glad that these views had been included within the EHC Plan and that strategies had been put in place to support her.

The family said that they felt less confused about the process and was glad that the professionals had taken on board their and C's views and that they did not have to go to Tribunal.

The family informed RIASS that they felt empowered by our support and able to carry on querying professionals until the right support was put in place.

You said, we did!

You said that you would like RIASS to hold drop-in sessions

We now hold drop in sessions every week across the borough where we can meet with families to discuss their issues.

We have been present in the new engagement hubs in Loxford, Hainault Gants Hill and at Gearies Children Centre.

We are also in talks with Loxford Polyclinic to hold sessions within the community health centre.

You said that you felt we were not promoting the service enough

We have increased our presence at school coffee mornings this year. We have attended more staff meetings within health services and other LBR services to help promote the service

You said you'd like more information events

We have increased our participation and support with the arrangement of the Disability Festival, Redbridge Carers Support Service Carers Rights Day, Hainault Youth Fest, Mental Health & Education Welfare Wellbeing Events and with NELFT.

You said you'd like leaflets in different languages

We have started the process of producing leaflets in many different languages which we hope will be beneficial to our families.

Future Focus

Following on from last year's feedback, You Said, We Did, RIASS has trialled some drop-in sessions across the borough. The most successful drop in sessions were at Redbridge Adult Education Institute Engagement Hub in Gants Hill . This is the most central part of the borough with good parking and easy transport links. From September we plan to be present there on Wednesdays and Monday afternoons. Pop along for a cuppa and a chat!

We successfully recruited last year, for a new Case Worker but unfortunately at the same time our Advisor left the service. We now have a new Advisor joining RIASS imminently and we are currently interviewing for a new Case Worker, who will work on young person engagement within the service.

RIASS has put forward a proposal to the LA on future Community Engagement work and how the service can support and deliver this. This has been successfully received by the LA and we are in further talks regarding how we can develop the service within the boundaries of the Minimum Standards. This will make sure that young people and their families' voices are heard and captured in a positive way.

RIASS has delivered an overview of our training programme "What is an EHC Plan" to professionals. We have future sessions planned with other services across the LA too. This training/information session is aimed at those professionals who work with young people and their families who have an EHC Plan. This will give an insight into the process of obtaining an EHC Plan, its content and how they can contribute successfully to it..

RIASS has relaunched our Steering Group. We decided to cease the last Steering Group and reform a new group from Oct 2024. This was due to our Steering Group members moving on from, not only within the borough, but within education settings too. We also had requests to join from new voluntary sector services and parents.

RIASS Steering Group

Are you a parent/carers of a child or young person who lives in Redbridge?

Would you be interested in joining our Steering Group as a parent/carers representative?

Redbridge Information, Advice and Support Service (RIASS) is an impartial information, advice and support service for children and young people with SEN and/or disabilities (SEND) and their parents/carers.

To make sure that RIASS operates impartially and at “arm’s length” from the Local Authority & ICB (Integrated Care Board), the provision of information, advice and support to children and young people with SEND and their parents/carers is overseen by a Steering Group.

With joining the Steering Group, you will be supporting with the growth of this vital service and help structure the way in which we deliver information, advice and support to parent/carers and young people living in Redbridge.

The current Steering Group is made up of parent representatives, education settings and specialised support services within LBR, including the EP service and Early Years’ service.

The aims and objectives of the Steering Group is to:

- Act as a “critical friend” to RIASS.
- Regulate and ensure “arm’s length” requirements and impartiality from the LA and ICB.
- To guide and support the development of RIASS.
- Monitor compliance with the IASS National Minimum Standards.
- Review, scrutinise and agree all practice, proposals, policies, and promotional materials.
- To offer practical advice and support regarding any publicity/promotional and training requirements.
- Ensure that the views of children, young people, parents, and carers are shared with the Local Authority when appropriate, to promote change in local policy and practice.
- Monitor RIASS’ engagement with all relevant partners locally, regionally and nationally.

The Steering Group meets once a term and up to four times a year. The meetings are held during the day and are around 2 hours long. There may be times outside of the meetings where we may ask for your support and opinions on the service through paper correspondences.

If you are interested in supporting RIASS, please email the service with a short statement (no more than 500 words) on why you would like to join the Steering Group and the support you can provide the service.

If you would like further information about the Steering Group, then please contact the service. riass@redbridge.gov.uk or the manager Emma Bell Emma.bell@redbridge.gov.uk